

How can open access work with promotion & tenure?

Heather Coates and Jere Odell

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Despite many changes in scholarly publishing and evidence for an open access citation advantage, many faculty are still worried about how their publication choices might affect their case for promotion and tenure. Over the past several years, we have identified a few strategies to alleviate those concerns and encourage faculty to include the full range of scholarly products they create along with more diverse metrics for impact. As we describe in a recent College and Research Libraries News [column](#), librarians at IUPUI have been working to align promotion and tenure (P&T) values with open access (OA) for many years. We have found engaging faculty both as individual scholars and as partners in faculty governance to be very effective. Although engaging faculty at these levels requires a significant investment of time, it has built trust in the library and in librarians as the stewards of scholarship produced at IUPUI. We believe this approach is useful for other institutions. In this blog post, we will build on our CRLN column to further discuss how our workshops and involvement in faculty governance are changing policy and practice.

Engaging in faculty governance to change policy

In 2015, the IUPUI Office for Academic Affairs added a statement regarding the value of open access to the “[Chief Academic Officer’s Guidelines for Preparing and Reviewing Pro...](#)” (see Institutional Values, p. 34). These recent additions are one result of persistent effort toward building a favorable culture for OA. Working side by side with faculty in governance is a reminder that librarians are partners outside the classroom, as well as within and creates shared experiences that build trust and understanding. It is these strong relationships and the accumulated trust that allowed us to successfully advocate for OA policies in the context of other efforts. In addition to the P&T guidelines, librarian participation in faculty governance committees has led to a “Harvard-style” OA policy, and inclusion of OA goals in the research and campus-level strategic plans.



Enabling changes in practice

Successfully implementing these policies relies on individual scholars to change their practice – in how they disseminate their work, in what products they choose to disseminate, and the

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evidence they use to support their case for promotion and tenure. IUPUI librarians have enabled practical, incremental change in the reporting of scholarship for P&T by providing workshops and individual consultations. We support broader participation in OA by depositing publications, presentations, posters, conference proceedings, course syllabi, and more into the institutional repository, [IUPUI ScholarWorks](#). Doing so creates a more complete and accurate scholarly record, while enabling faculty to get credit for scholarship beyond journal articles and books.

In advising faculty and students on selection criteria for publication, we do not ask faculty to prioritize OA over all other considerations. Rather, we encourage them to identify the best venue for the audience they want to reach. If the best venue is a subscription-only journal, we support them in making available the pre-, post-print, or published version as allowed. Putting more products online with a permanent address and unique identifier (e.g., handle or DOI) makes it much easier to demonstrate how researchers, practitioners, and the public are interacting with those products. Faculty have a much richer body of evidence to support their case for promotion and tenure using webometrics and altmetrics as evidence of engagement with communities outside of academia, as well as preliminary indicators of reuse.

Walking the talk

We have also demonstrated the value of these practices by walking the talk -- modeling our own scholarly dissemination after these recommendations. For example, one of the authors, Heather Coates, recently submitted her dossier for promotion and tenure to Associate Librarian. Inspired by conversations with faculty and the passion of the [OpenCon community](#), she wrote her dossier with the intention of making it open ([Figshare](#); [IUPUI ScholarWorks](#)). Heather adapted a program evaluation approach to demonstrate the impact of her practice and scholarship. She chose open access venues to maximize readership and used webometrics and altmetrics to demonstrate engagement with relevant communities of practice.

All librarians can gain experience with research metrics data and tools to develop practical knowledge about their strengths and limitations. And all librarians can demonstrate the value of open access by modeling good practices. Such knowledge, combined with personal experience of reflecting on its meaning in your own work, is a powerful tool for engaging faculty and aligning support with their professional priorities and practices. We encourage librarians to ask faculty about their priorities and concerns. Listen and then help them strategically disseminate and track their scholarly products in ways that support openness and professional advancement.

by Heather Coates & Jere Odell, [IUPUI University Library](#)

Image is of [Learning Spaces III](#)